

What is claimed is:

1. A system for providing a remote support service between at least one support-service provider's site and a customer's site having a customer's information technological (IT) infrastructure, comprising:

an information collecting component which collects information about the customer's IT infrastructure;

a storage component which stores collected information according to a data model modeling at least part of the customer's IT infrastructure;

an information-transferring component capable of transferring at least part of the collected or stored information or a representation of it to the support-service provider;

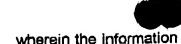
an analysis component which analyzes the stored or transferred information or representation as a basis for the provision of the remote support services.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the storage component is located at least at one of the customer's site and the support-service provider's site.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the analysis component is located at least at one of the customer's site and the support-service provider's site.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising a consolidator component which is capable of generating a consolidated representation of the collected or stored information, said consolidator component is located at least at one of the customer's site and the support-service provider's site.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the customer's IT infrastructure comprises at least one of the following elements: network infrastructure elements, storage systems, hardware elements and peripherals, operating systems, networking software, database software, middleware and utilities, software applications; and



wherein the information collecting component collects information about at least one of these elements and the data model models at least part of these elements and their inter-relations.

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6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a discovery component capable of automatically discovering changes in the customer's IT infrastructure, and wherein the data model is automatically adapted so that it models the changed IT infrastructure.

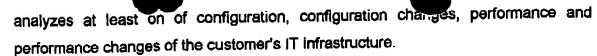
7. The system of claim 6, wherein, due to the automatic discovering capability of the discovery component, after an installation of a program code representing the software parts of the information collecting component, the storage component and the information-transferring component at the customer's site, the system automatically discovers at least part of the customer's IT infrastructure and automatically generates a data model which models it.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein, in the database component, the elements of the customer's IT infrastructure are mapped to classes, and wherein new classes can dynamically be added, and wherein the classes have flexible attributes which can be dynamically added and changed.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the information-transferring component is capable of transferring the collected or stored information or a representation of it via an information network, particularly the Internet, to the support-service provider, or by means of a data carrier.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the database component stores at least one of configuration and performance history information of the customer's IT infrastructure.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the analysis component monitors or



12. The system of claim 1, wherein the information collecting component comprises a scheduler which schedules the collection of the information about the customer's IT infrastructure.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein the collection strategy or schedule is determined individually for the customers, depending on the particular support service contract between the customer and the support-service provider.

14. A computer system forming a customer based part of a system for providing a remote support service between at least one support-service provider's site and the customer's site having a customer's information technological (IT) infrastructure, comprising:

an information collecting component which collects information about the customer's IT infrastructure;

a storage component which stores collected information according to a data model modeling at least part of the customer's IT infrastructure;

an information-transferring component capable of transferring at least part of the collected or stored information or of a consolidated representation of it to the support-service provider.

15. A computer program product including program code for execution on a customer-based computer system which is part of a system for providing a remote support service between at least one support-service provider's site and the customer's site having a customer's information technological (IT) infrastructure, said program code comprising software parts of:

an information collecting component which collects information about the customer's IT infrastructure;

a storage component which stores collected information according to a data

